

Ed. Shuckburgh
ANTIOCHUS,
A NEW
TRAGEDY.

By a GENTLEMAN of Gloucestershire,
Charles Shuckburgh.

Vulnus alit venis, et cæco carpitur igni.

See Vol 10th a Play on of same Subject



L O N D O N :

Printed for J. SHUCKBURGH, at the *Sun*,
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(Price One Shilling and Six-pence.)

ANTHONY

A NEW

TRAGEDY.

By a Gentleman of the University of Cambridge



Printed and Sold by J. B. ...



LONDON

Printed for J. B. ...

1788

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PROLOGUE.

IF when the hireling Brothers of the Blade
Thro' five cold Bouts without a Wound have play'd ;
Some Youth of Fire should rashly mount the Stage,
And rather than be sham'd, himself engage ;
His Cause their own th' applauding Circles think,
Deal all his Blows, and at his Dangers shrink.
Thus for the Stage our bold Advent'rer quits
The safe Side-box, and dares to mix with Wits ;
Hoping at least for as much Favour here,
As wou'd be shewn at Stokes's Theatre.
Why did he write? — a Question shrew'd 'tis true,
But fairly first to please himself — then you.
He pleads no Call, no scurrilous Pretence
To mend the Times, at half the Town's Expence :
Wou'd not, Apollo's brightest Wreath to wear,
Wring from the fenceless Virgin's Eyes a Tear ;
Or coin a Lye, or whisper'd Scandal spread,
To grieve the Living, or insult the Dead :
But bravely dares to vindicate the Stage
From private Malice, and from Party Rage.
A moving Tale he tells, untaught by Art,
To melt the hard, and mend the vicious Heart ;
Shews a Distress which you yourselves may share,
The Wise may suffer, and the Good must bear,
When Virtue's struggles, and its Pangs we prove,
While Reason, Nature, Duty, strive with Love.
Once by the Master's Touch, our Scene exprest
On glowing Canvas, fir'd each virtuous Breast ;
Whilst the sick Youth in secret Wishes pin'd,
And the fond Maid th' indulgent Sire resign'd :
Admiring Crowds adopt the piteous Cause,
And sympathizing Romans wept Applause.
Oh! cou'd our Muse the Painter's Art supply,
Such gen'rous Drops shou'd grace each British Eye.

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

Seleucus Nicanor, King of *Syria*.

Antiochus, His Son, secretly in Love with *Stratonice*.

Barzanes, Prince of *Cappadocia*, and Friend to *Antiochus*.

Tigranes, The King's Favourite and General, in Love with *Arsinoe*.

W O M E N.

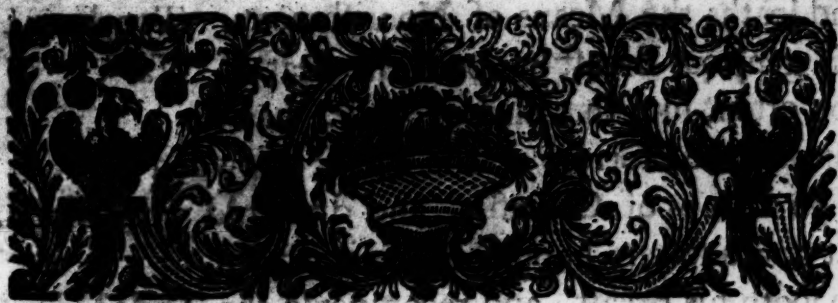
Stratonice, Princess of *Macedonia*, betroth'd to *Seleucus*,
and secretly in Love with *Antiochus*.

Arsinoe, Niece to the King, courted by *Tigranes*, but
in Love with *Antiochus*.

Pbenissa, Attendant on *Stratonice*.

Cleone, *Arsinoe*'s Confident.

Messenger, Page, Guards, &c.



ANTIOCHUS.

ACT I. SCENE I.

The City of Antioch.

Enter Barzanes and Tigranes.

Bar.



HERE will the Glory of *Seleucus*
end?

Conquest, the Pride of Empire, still
attends

To crown with Lawrel the victorious Brow
Of *Syria's* Monarch. Nations, lately hostile,
With servile Embassy confess his Pow'r,
And wait the Nod of Sov'reignty.

Tig. Seleucus,

Advanc'd to th' highest Pinnacle of Glory,
Wisely at length prescribes a happy Period
To his Ambition, and the Lust of Conquest.
Ambition, like the eager Appetite,
Cloy'd with a constant Series of Success,
Begins to sicken with Satiety,

B

And

And loaths the Means of Nourishment, Too long
 His gen'rous Breast has been the Seat of War ;
 Too often, like the Bird of *Jove*, has he
 Enjoy'd the Horrors of the Field, crowded
 With Heaps of Carcasses, and drench'd with Blood.
 But now a softer, happier Scene is drawn,
 To sooth his Breast, and recompense the Toil
 Of tedious War, disclosing balmy Sweets,
 Refreshments fit for Monarchs to regale with.

Bar. What can be added to his Diadem
 Of greater Value than it bears already ?
 What can remain in Pleasure's boundless Hoard,
 As yet untasted by the great *Seleucus* ?
 Fame, Honour, Riches, Empire's brightest Gems,
 The Pride of Conquest, and the Grasp of Pow'r,
 Are grafted on his Scepter, which each Year
 Shoot into Bloom, and show a forward Spring
 Of future Triumphs, and succeeding Glories.
 What then remains that can enhance his Grandeur,
 And lead him to a happier mortal State ?

Tig. 'Tis, my *Barzanes*, what crowns all the rest,
 And makes the Whole compleat ; by which alone
 The Weight of Empire will sit easy on him.
 'Tis Love has soften'd thus the Warriour's Breast,
 And melted down his Soul. Fair *Stratonice*,
 The *Macedonian* Princess, has accomplish'd
 More than their boasted *Phalanx* e're cou'd hope.
 Her Beauty's Fame has quite disarm'd the Rage
 Of great *Nicanor*, turn'd the Edge of War,
 And brought both haughty Monarchs to compliance
 In Terms of perfect Amity.

Bar.

Bar. The Story,

However pleasing, bears the show of Wonder :
For say, how comes it that *Demetrius*
(Who always had invet'rate Enmity
Against this Realm, cherish'd from Infancy,
Both by his Father's Counsel and Example)
Contracts so firm Alliance with *Seleucus* ?

Tig. 'Tis Policy, mere Policy, which makes
Princes forget Affronts, and Injuries,
As easily as Friendships. The vanquish'd King,
By adverse Fate compell'd to sue for Peace,
Offers his only Daughter as a Pledge
To strengthen the Alliance. The wily *Greek*
Has hit the Foible of his Conqueror,
Tho' old in Arms, yet youthful in Desire,
Soft to the Stamp of glowing Beauty's Charms.
By this the *Macedon* will gain his Ends,
Have Time to recollect his shatter'd Fortune;
By this the *Syrian* Monarch will complete
His utmost Wishes, resolutely bent
To sacrifice Ambition to his Love.

Bar. No less a Wonder, that the great *Seleucus*,
Unchill'd beneath the frozen Hand of Time,
Shou'd feel those Sparks, as yet not quite extinguish'd,
Glow in his Heart, and kindle into Flames.
Surely the bounteous Gods were lavish grown
At the Formation of *Seleucus*' Soul,
And to enrich the noble Composition,
Infus'd a double Pow'r of Spirit in him.

Tig. He lives a mighty Monument of Glory,
Reserv'd a Sample of that God-like Race,
That rang'd in Sport with *Alexander* o'er

The World. But to our Point. The Prince his Son
 Each Hour we wait : And O, ye Gods! that guard
 The Syrian Empire, watchful for our Glory,
 Protect *Antiochus*, and safe convey
 His precious Freight, the beauteous *Stratonice*,
 But see what Crouds from ev'ry Quarter throng!
 Each with impatient Looks catches the News,
 Nor stays to be inform'd. Behold here's one,
 Whose eager Haste speaks something of Importance.

Enter Messenger.

Your Business.

Mess. The Prince *Antiochus*
 Commanded me, my Lord, to let you know,
 The *Macedonian* Princess is arriv'd.
 The Vows are paying to propitious *Neptune*,
 And at the Temple all expect *Tigranes*
 T'attend them to the Palace.

Fig. Welcome News!

With Joy we all receive the gracious Summons,

(Exit Messenger.)

Hark! the shrill Trumpet's Voice confirms the Message,
 And the glad Populace proclaim their Entry. *(Exeunt.)*

SCENE II.

The Temple of Neptune.

Enter Antiochus leading Stratonice, &c.

Antiochus to the Statue of Neptune.

O Thou! whose mighty Arms embrace the Earth,
 And with thy awful Trident shak'st the World,

Let

ANTI OCH U S.

Let lowing Hecatombs before thy Shrine
Proclaim our Gratitude; that on thy ample
Back thou'st born the richest Prize to *Antioch*,
Since Sea-born *Venus* left the watry Plain.

S O N G.

BEHOLD once more the Cyprian Queen,
In *Stratonice's* Form!

Her Influence o'er each Wave is seen,
She curbs the threat'ning Storm.

All Nature thus with Pride obeys,
When Beauty gives Command;
Her's is the Trident o're the Seas,
And Scepter on the Land.

Antiochus to *Stratonice*.

Thro' Toils immense the Fair has urg'd her Way;
But now, great Queen, the happy Hour is come,
That puts an everlasting Period
To ev'ry Danger; and *Antiochus*
Perceives a Beam of Joy dart thro' the Cloud
That late hung over him, to find Success
Attend his best Endeavours, and to see
Fair *Stratonice* safe in *Antioch*.

But oh! why should I thank my treach'rous Hand,
That thus has brought her but to give her from me? (*Aside*.)

Stra. Alas! my Lord, determin'd to endure
Whatever Fate lies yet unripen'd for me,
I little am affected what the Hue,

What

6 *ANTI OCH U S.*

What the Complexion of the Lot shall prove.
 Who once embarques, when the proud Pinnacle ploughs
 The Waves, shou'd grow indifferent to the Shore.
 So soon arriv'd ! Indeed, my Lord, each Day
 Seem'd but of half it's Length ; to me each League
 Was but of scanty Measure, and past o'er,
 Just as methought we made our Entrance in it.
 Tell me, *Antiochus*, was I awake ?

Or did I sleep, and dream the fleeting Hours away ?

Ant. So may your Life be one progressive Point
 Of Happiness, serenely moving on,
 Without a Shadow cast by envious Fate
 To mark the silent Step of transient Time :
 Whilst I, computing by my lazy Pulse,
 Think ev'ry sleepless Night an Age. My Heart
 At length grows weary of its thankless Office,
 And flutt'ring half performs the Task of Life :
 Ev'n now I feel a chilly Damp, that seems
 The noxious Dew falling before the cold
 Unmeasurable Night.

Pbe. These Symptoms, Madam,
 Plainer than Words describe his stifled Passion,
 And prove what you desire. (*Aside to Stratonice,*

Stra. to Pbe. Oh ! no, *Phenissa* !

Thou know'st my Weakness, and wouldst flatter it.

Ant. What now remains but to give up my Charge ;
 And then to seek in friendly Solitude
 That Peace, my envious Fate has long deny'd ?

Stra. Cruel Resolve ! it nips the very Blossom
 Of all my Hopes. (*Aside.*

And are you still, my Lord,
 Thus obstinately bent upon Retirement ?

This

A N T I O C H U S.

7

This is not like the Musick of that Tongue,
That held us list'ning as by Magick Charms,
Till we insensibly had pass'd the Gulph,
Where th' *Adriatick* holds eternal War
Against th' *Ionian* Waves.

Ant. Forgive it, Madam :
Sickness is in its Nature obstinate,
As kin to Death that is inexorable.

Stra. Sickness and Solitude sure never meet
But in some dreadful Curse. If e're the Voice
Of Friendship sweetly sounds, 'tis to the sick
Man's Ear. Whoe'r, when Health, my Lord, decays,
Discards his Friend, by the same Rule might from
The tot'ring Pile discharge the faithful Prop.

Ant. What Extasy to hear her argue for me!
And yet I dare not rudely interrupt
That Happiness I can't enjoy. (*Afide*) But see
The good *Tigranes*, whose Affection ever
Prompts him to be the foremost in his Duty.

Enter Tigranes with Attendants.

Tig. Let me with bended Knees congratulate
My Prince's safe Arrival, and give Praise
Both to the Gods and him, for purchasing
So fair a Jewel to enrich the Crown.

Ant. Rise, rise, *Tigranes*, and receive the Thanks
Thy Merit may command. But first, my Friend,
Kindly inform us of my Father's Welfare,
And how his Bosom brooks this tedious Absence.
Say, my *Tigranes*, does he blame my Conduct,
And ev'n think th' impetuous Winds too slow?

Tig.

8 ANTIOCCHUS.

Fig. The King, my Lord (hail as the sturdy Pine,
That stands aloft, and shelters all beneath it)
Blames neither Heav'n, nor you; but with a decent
And just Impatience, waits the wish'd Return
Of all his Hopes; and as a wary Merchant,
Who trusts his Fortune to the Winds and Seas,
Listens attentive to the whistling Blast,
And feels the gathering Storm.

Ant. I own the Charge.

How justly I'm accus'd for being a Loiterer!
Come, we will hasten to redeem past Time,
And catch the flying Moments as they rise.

(Exeunt.)

SCENE III.

The Royal Palace of Seleucus, represented by a Triumphal Arch, under which stands the Throne, and Seleucus seated upon it royally attended with all the Ornaments of Love and Peace.

Seleucus to his Lords about him.

Princes! by whose unweary'd Arms the Son
Of *Lybian Ammon* scourg'd the Pride of Kings;
Let our revengeful Swords at length repose,
And all our Thoughts be to repair Mankind.
Your latest Sons shall feel the Influence
Of my approaching Glory, nobly rising
From this Alliance with the *Macedonian*.
And surely it must be by all confest,
Happy's that Prince, who cannot but establish

The

A N T I O C H U S. 9

The publick Welfare from his private Choice:
 Who of Necessity, whilst he himself
 Is blest within, is blessing all around him.
 Such is the State of *Syria*, prosp'rous State!
 For which let ev'ry loyal Heart rejoice,
 And the proud Walls of *Antioch* be adorn'd
 With Wreaths of Myrtle interwove with Olive.
 Fed with alternate Fruits of Love and Peace,
 My high exalted Soul is doubly blest.

*Enter Antiochus leading Stratonice, Tigranes, Arsinoe,
 with other Lords, &c.*

Fair *Stratonice* reigns the Queen of Beauty,
 Driving her peaceful Doves throughout the Land.

Ant. Health to the Lord of *Asia*, great *Nicanor* hail!

Seleucus descends from his Throne to meet them. He embraces Antiochus, who kneels before him.

Sel. Thrice welcome to these Arms, thou best of Sons!
 And what Returns have I for all these Blessings
 Thy gen'rous Labours have bestow'd upon me?
 O, I could hold thee ever here! but that
 My Soul o'ercharg'd with two such diff'rent Passions
 At once, recoils, and must submit to both.

Ant. I here resign that sacred Charge, that can
 Alone advance the Grandeur of *Seleucus*.

Sel. Why Fame sure doats, and has forgot to flatter;
 All her hundred lying Tongues have faulter'd
 In their cold Praise of *Stratonice's* Charms.
 Had *Macedon* but half an Age ago

Been blest'd with thy transcendent Beauty,
 Great *Alexander* cou'd not, thus engag'd,
 Have left the wrangling World without an Heir.
 But why, alas! why shrinks thy trembling Hand?
 What means this Sigh? and why that precious Tear?
 Perhaps we're pictur'd in thy tender Heart
 Enclasp'd in rugged Arms, with all th' Habiliments
 Of War, an Object more of Fear than Love.
 Therefore, my Queen, permit me here to add
 To all these Homages, and humble Pomp,
 Myself an Off'ring to my Love, more proud
 In thus submitting to your Charms, than in (*Kneels to her.*
 The Spoils of War, and Luxury of Triumphs.

Stra. Rise, Royal Sir, and spare a Maiden's Blush,
 (*Raising him.*

To see thus lowly bent the great *Seleucus*
 Debasing sacred Majesty with the Form
 Of Servitude, the Discipline of Slaves.
 The Gods sure ne're intended *Syria's* Monarch
 Shou'd bow to any Altars but their own.

Sel. But, Madam, ev'n the Gods themselves allow
 A Pow'r in Love superior to their own;
 And *Jove* himself, we're told, has oft' been forc'd
 To quit his Sov'reignty to bribe his Love.
 Cease then, my Queen, to blush with Shame or Wonder,
 That here on Earth shou'd be such Metamorphoses,
 When Heav'n itself is subject to the Change.

(*Observing Antiochus in a melancholy Posture.*

But why, *Antiochus*?

Why does the Gloom of Sorrow overcast
 The Joy, that should exult in ev'ry Breast?
 Whence is that down-cast Look, those folded Arms?
 Thou

Thou can'st not too mistake thy Father's Love.
 Thou know'st thy Image is the Idol of
 His inmost Soul, thy Sorrow must be his,
 Which quite perverts the Stream of all his Transports.

Ant. Forgive, great Sir, if my too rigid Fate,
 Amidst the Sun-shine of this glorious Day,
 Compells me thus, so singularly sad,
 To usher in your Joys with Looks of Mourning :
 For which I beg Relief from some Retirement.

Sel. O, my *Antiochus*, forbear the Thought !
 The Want of you will strike out half the Joy
 This flatt'ring Day first promis'd to *Seleucus*.
 Let not the Blaze of Royal Grandeur be
 Too dazzling for the Heir of *Syria's* Throne.
 Princes, like Gods, should bear the sparkling Rays
 Of their own Glory, tho' perhaps too bright
 For common Eyes, they strike the Vulgar blind.

Ant. O, hold my Father! suffer for awhile
 My strong Indisposition to plead for me :
 Grieve not at what the Pow'rs above inflict :
 A little Rest will animate again
 My drooping Spirits, and give me Strength to bear
 The pompous Nuptials of an Eastern King.

Sel. Must Happiness then ne're descend on Man
 In sacred Purity, without th' Allay
 Of some unthought of Misery to disturb it ?
 But what the Gods command we must obey,
 My *Stratonice*, and suspend our Joys
 Till Heav'n approves. Be careful of your Health,
 To-morrow may administer new Life.
 Mean time may soft Repose, and balmy Sweets
 Disperse these Clouds of Care,

Stra. And may the Gods (as she is going off with Seleucus.
 With their propitious Aid your Griefs redress,
 And crown your Health with all your Heart can wish.
(Exeunt all but Antiochus.

Ant. With all your Heart can wish! O, *Stratonice!*
 There you have toucht me in a wounded Part.
 Did you but know the Cause of my Disorder,
 You need not thus have ask'd the God's Assistance,
 But have made use of your own Sov'reign Pow'r
 To heal this Breast, — this tortur'd Breast.—
 But hold, my Heart; I will not yet accuse Thee
 Of Pride, Ambition, Baseness, Treach'ry,
 And all the bold Injustice of thy Passion,
 To make the Queen the Object of thy Love!
 First think with Horror on the secret Murmurs
 That Nature whisper'd to thy frantick Vows,
 When ev'ry impious Sigh offended Heav'n!
 Hah! is she not by Contract and Consent,
 Thy King, thy Father's Wife? Say, ye just Gods,
 What new invented Torments has your Wrath
 In Store for violated Faith and Duty?
 Distracting Thought! —————
 Yet whilst I live, and gaze upon her Charms,
 Each Word, each Look unnerves my slack'ning Virtue,
 And melts down Resolution into Love.
 Yield, yield, I must, and must in Combination
 Act with my Heart, 'gainst Reason and my Duty;
 Still I must love, my Destiny commands me.
 Why was I made with such a strong Abhorrence
 Of the least Guilt, yet live a Slave to Incest?
 Ye Gods! by what capricious Turn of Fate
 Am I thus doom'd to court the Crime I hate? *(Exit.*

A C T II.



ACT II. SCENE I.

Stratonice and Phenissa.

Stra. **H**OW ill does all the Pageantry of Pride
 Accord with real Grief? It then becomes
 The Sport of Fate, and Mockery of Woe.
 'Tis by the Plummets of Distress we found
 The Shallowness of human Greatness.
 Like the gay Ship that spreading wide her Sails
 To the false Zephyrs, founders on the Shelves,
 And rides triumphant to Destruction.

Phe. Forgive me, Madam, but methinks 'tis strange,
 While Opportunity was young, and Fate
 Yet flexible, that you cou'd not prevent,
 Or dissipate these gathering Ills, before
 They ripen'd to a Crisis.

Stra. Oh! were ours
 A common Story, such as ev'ry Nurse
 Can tell to wond'ring Villagers around
 The glowing Embers, till the Winter's Night
 Seems short; of cruel Fathers, treach'rous Youths,
 And fond too credulous deluded Maids;
 Methinks I yet cou'd learn to bear my Fate,
 And scorn the Pity I perhaps deserv'd;
 But scorn myself much more that I deserv'd it.

Phe. Madam, you wrong your Virtue to suppose it.

Stra.

14 *A N T I O C H U S.*

Stra. I do, *Pbeniffa*. By the King's Commands
I listen'd to *Antiochus*, who, in
His Father's Name, try'd all the Arts of Love
To steal into my Heart; which I confess
Grew so accustom'd to receive his Vows,
And hear him sue for Pity, I at length
Forgot to think him but an Advocate.

Pbe. And he now falls a Victim in the Flame,
With which perhaps at first he only meant
To play.

Stra. So thou woud'st have me think: but I
Was never yet so vain as to believe thee.
But soft! No more I charge thee. See, the King.

Enter Seleucus and Tigranes.

Sel. My boding Heart feels an unusual Chilness,
Which strikes a Damp thro' all my promis'd Bliss.
Say, my *Tigranes*, what are thy Conjectures?
What private Observations hast thou made
Upon the Prince? How does my Son? I fear
To dive too deep into the Secret,
Yet must be satisfy'd.

Tig. Forgive, great Sir,
The strong Reluctance of my silent Tongue,
Unwilling to untune the Harmony
Of your auspicious Love; but to obey
My Sov'reign's Will; if from Appearances
We may have leave to judge, the Fate of *Syria*
Hangs doubtful in the Scale; which way 'twill turn,
Must be determin'd by the Gods alone;
Yet much I fear; for he's no more *Antiochus*,

But

But sad, dejected, meagre, worn with Care;
His Brow contracted, his whole Form diminish'd,
As if he'd quitted Youth, and leapt at once
Into the hoary Class of froward Age.

Sel. Whence, O, ye Gods! proceeds this wondrous
Change?

The Mind's Disorder often is deriv'd
From a Defect of what it most desires:
But can he blame the niggardness of Fate?
No, for whate'er can satisfy the Mind,
And with Possession fill the longing Soul,
Has always, and shall still attend his Wishes;
And wheresoe'er the strength of his Ambition
Directs his Hopes, and leads his tow'ring Thoughts,
There shall he find the Object of his Wish,
And make Enjoyment sure. O, *Stratonice*!
Unfold this Riddle; for perhaps he has
To you unlock'd his Bosom, and disclos'd
The secret Anguish that thus preys upon him.

Stra. The Marks of Sorrow I have often trac'd
Thro' all the Discomposure of his Looks;
But for the Cause, my Lord, I am to seek.
Too much I fear that Jealousy o'ercomes
His natural Temper; that my Interest here
Shou'd make him dread the Change of your Affections,
And fear the Ebb of your paternal Care.
But, O, my Lord! if that shou'd be the Cause,
Use speedy Means to blot it from his Soul;
And well convince him, Sir, that *Stratonice*
Wou'd suffer any thing, wou'd sooner die,
Than, at the Price of his Contentment, gain
The Empire of the World.

Sel.

Sel. O, No, my Queen!

It is not in his Nature to be envious
Of your Deserts, or doubt his Father's Love.
My Care of him has still enforc'd his Duty,
And still his Duty must enforce my Care;
Which I'll exert to th' utmost: And behold,
The fair *Arfinoe* most opportunely
Approaches, as if Heav'n itself had given her
The lucky Hint to favour my Design.

Enter Arfinoe.

For oft where Science fails, and deep learn'd Rhetorick,

Beauty with Ease obtains it's subtle Purposes.
Such is its Pow'r, as such we will employ it;
Nay try both ways: and therefore, my *Tigranes*,
Be thou the Reasoner, pry into his Actions,
And sift his deepest Thoughts.

Tig. My Royal Lord,
I'll use my best Endeavours to discover
The Cause of this Appearance.

Sel. Whilst you, fair Niece (for you have piercing Eyes)

Use all your soft Persuasion to disclose
Your Cousin's Illness, and the same Reward
Shall be to both.

Arf. You may command us, Sir.

Sel. I know, *Tigranes*, you've been Suitor long
Where all must justify your Choice; she must
Herself approve, when so much Virtue pleads.
Ev'n now her glowing Cheeks confess the Truth,
And speak those Joys she labours to conceal.

Now,

Now, my *Tigranes*, my firm Purpose is,
 That the same Sun which shines upon my Nuptials,
 Shall, if the Gods *Antiochus* restore,
 Direct his Steps to mount *Phenicia's* Throne;
 And to complete the Harmony, shall shed
 Its grateful Influence on your happy Loves,
 Confirm your Hopes, and make one glorious Day
 Shine out with equal Lustre on us all.

Fig. How smooth the Front of War! how smiling
 sits

The Goddess, crown'd with golden Promises
 Of future Fame, and recompensing Love!
 Rewarded thus, each Wound new Life affords.
 Excess of Goodness! Let me prostrate fall,
 To render Thanks for my great Sov'reign's Bounty.

Sel. Enough, my Friend, your Virtue gives you
 Merit,

And Merit claims for ever a Reward.
 Hasten to my Son, and tell him these Resolves:
 The World speaks loud of our paternal Care,
 And we shall strive to justify Report. (*Exeunt*)

SCENE II.

*Opens and discovers Antiochus in a solitary Grove. He
 comes forward.*

Ant. Well did the Founder of imperial *Antioch*
 With Woods, and flow'ry Lawns her Bounds extend;
 With equal Distribution mixing thus
 The City's Noise, and rural Solitude.

There

There the cool Groves admit no sultry Ray,
 And here in solemn State the verdant Slopes
 With healthful Streams the proud Orontes laves.
 But thou can'st find no Rest, *Antiochus*
 Thee neither Courts divert, nor Fields can please.

Enter Tigranes at a Distance.

But soft! what's he that thus intrudes upon me
 To rob me of my Woes? Who, my *Tigranes*?
 Is it the natural Bent of Inclination,
 Or your Obedience to my Father's Will,
 That brought you to this Place of Solitude?
 Am I oblig'd to Choice, or Duty?

Tig. Both.

My Inclination and the King's Commands
 Conspire, if possible, to break the Charm
 Of this ill-fated Magick, which displays
 To your deluded Senses airy Forms
 Of fancy'd Cares, imaginary Tortures.
 This gloomy Shade's a fitter Mansion far
 For pensive Souls, inur'd to Desolation,
 Big with austere Philosophy; too reclusé
 For sprightly Youth, and Royalty to dwell in.

Ant. O, my Tigranes! I cou'd live an Age,
 Grow grey beneath these venerable Shades.
 Here in refin'd and undisturb'd Ideas,
 I can converse with pure unblended Nature;
 Can see, as on a safe and quiet Shore,
 The many Seas on which this giddy World
 Is daily tost, th' inevitable Wrecks,
 And all the vain Delusions of our Folly;

Whilst

Whilst I thus fold myself, and wrap me round,
Amidst the silent Pleasure of my Thoughts,
With low, but blest Obscurity.

Tig. Such Thoughts

Suit but the Circumstance of narrow Souls,
Scarce kindled, and but just enough inspir'd,
To warm their little Tenements, and drudge on
To twist with Care the homely Thread of Life:
But Kings are sacred, and ally'd to Heav'n
In a more ample Manner; are distinguish'd
By dealing Justice and dispensing Laws
To lesser Mortals, and inferior Worlds.
Kings are the Gods Vice-gerents, and you One,
Whom even now your eager Subjects wait
To crown with Glory, and to see exalted
High and conspicuous on your Throne; so hail
Phenicia's King! no longer Prince of *Syria*.

Ant. With what harsh Discord dost thou wound my
Ears?

No longer Prince, but King! O, my *Tigranes!*
Recall those Words, and load me not with Chains
Of fresh Calamities.—
My present Woes have strain'd my Heart already
To such a Pitch, that sure this new Addition
Will burst its Strings asunder.—
Yet if I must be chang'd, O, let me, Friend!
Let me descend till I can fall no lower,
From the high Station I'm already in
To th' lowest Class of Life, from Prince to Beggar.
If that be yet too high, too blest a Thought,
Let me still fall, and sink into the Earth.
But not a Word, *Tigranes*, if you love me,

Of scaling Mountains, and ascending Thrones,
Methinks I see already from the Top
The dismal Precipice; my Brain turns round,
And I grow giddy at the dazling Prospect.
I cannot bear it.

Tig. O, my sovereign Prince!
Call forth your royal Virtues, and exert
Your wonted Vigour to dispel this Gloom,
This fatal Gloom that hangs upon your Spirits.

Ant. Alas, *Tigranes*! Such a Flood of Anguish
Breaks in upon me, that it quite pollutes
The very Fountain of my Life: —
And with its rapid Inundation fouls
The natural Current of my once clear Reason.
What must I do to save myself from sinking?
Let me catch hold on thee! Once, my *Tigranes*,
Thou prov'dst thyself a Friend, a valiant Friend,
When in the very midst of Blood and Slaughter
Thou did'st uphold the weakness of thy Prince.
Did'st not thou catch me fainting in thy Arms,
Receive the Blow, and rob me of my Wound?
Speak did'st thou not?

Tig. It is too much, my Lord,
Thus to reproach me with my feeble Service:
Well I remember in the heat of Action,
With fresh Recruits I hasten'd to assist
Your weary'd Troops, but to my Joy and Wonder,
Found my *Antiochus* amidst the Spoils
Of glorious War; saw him intrench'd around
With Heaps of Bodies he had slain, still raising
A Bulwark of his Foes against his Foes;
Then as a Friend to th' Conqueror, I seem'd

A Sharer

A Sharer of the Conquest; but indeed
Tigranes wrongfully usurp'd that Title,
 Broke thro' the Bounds of your new purchas'd Glory,
 And stole the Lawrel you yourself had gather'd.
 O, fully not the Glory of that Day!
 You wrong yourself, my Lord, are too unjust
 To your own Virtue, thus to plume her Wings,
 Only to imp the Pinions of my Fame.
 Too much already I'm indebted to you,
 Make me not more unworthy of your Favours
 By adding greater to them.

Ant. Well, *Tigranes*!

If you can think the Balance due to Friendship
 Is wanting on your Side, let me propose
 One Method will instruct you how to poize
 Th' unequal Scale, and turn the Obligation.
 Go to my Father, and address him from me,
 Prevail with him to yield to my Retreat;
 Perhaps a Month's Retirement may restore
 What I have lost in Courts, my Health, my Quiet.
 Go, and prevail, *Tigranes*.

Tig. O, already

Your Grief lies heavy on the King your Father,
 And like a Cloud just breaking o'er his Head,
 O'erwhelms his Soul. How will it pierce his Heart,
 To hear this long Continuance of your Sorrows?
 Think what Concern, what Tenderness affects
 The sympathizing Bosom of a Parent?
 How deep his Soul receives the strong Impression
 Struck by the cruel Hand of adverse Fortune;
 How apt to bleed upon the least Disorder,
 Fixing his Hopes and Fears, his Joy and Sorrow,
 Upon

22 *ANTIOCHUS.*

Upon the different Aspects of your Fate.

Ant. Too fast my Soul sucks in th' invenom'd Draught,
Now flowing from the Accents of thy Tongue;
It swells me so, that ev'n my present Woes
Have lost their Edge, or seem not half so sharp.
Were but my Cares within myself confin'd,
The very Secret wou'd relieve my Mind;
But when I know the good *Seleucus* feels
A kindred Pain, and shares my Weight of Ills;
When I perceive my Friends in deep Concern,
And that whole Kingdoms my Misfortunes mourn;
The Strokes fly back with such a strong Rebound,
They tear my Heart afresh, and widen ev'ry Wound.
(Exit.

Tig. He's gone, and like a stricken Deer forfakes
The frightened Herd, still bearing in his Side
The bearded Shaft sent from the nervous Yew;
Stun'd with the Blow, now this, now that way tends,
Pursuing still with solitary Steps
The less frequented Hills, and silent Vales.

Enter Barzanes.

But see! another too-so fond of Solitude!
Sure the Contagion spreads.

Bar. Save you, General.

Tig. And pray, my Lord, what pensive Thoughts
seduce
You from the Court?

Bar. The same, I fancy, Sir,
That brought you here: I've trac'd thro' ev'ry Grove,
And the least Tidings no way can I learn
Of the disconsolate *Antiochus*.

Tig.

Tig. Alas, my Lord! disconsolate indeed!
I found him, and endeavour'd to reclaim him;
But he, beyond the Art of my Persuasion,
Ev'n now flew from me.

Bar. Most unhappy Prince!

Tho' you, *Tigranes*, in your Suit have fail'd,
Yet such convincing Reasons urge my Mind
To hope Success, that I resolve alone
To fathom his Misfortunes, and, by Virtue
Of former Tyes of Friendship, to reduce
His wand'ring Soul, and bring him back to Reason.
Once we were link'd so close in Friendship's Bonds,
That whatsoever did affect the one,
Was faithfully imparted to the other,
Both joint Partakers of each other's Bosom.
Who knows but that the Marks of true Affection,
So deeply grav'd upon the Rock of Friendship,
May still remain, not utterly defac'd
By Absence, or the stronger Qualities
Of biting Anguish, and corroding Care.

Tig. Friendship's the strongest Argument, I grant,
To one not totally depriv'd of Sense;
But when the Light of Reason is extinct,
Then each familiar Object faints away,
And Colours lose their various Images
In th' Universal Blank. Ev'n Friendship's self
Inefficacious proves, and nothing but
Oblivion holds the Empire of the Brain.
Yet let us hope the best, and may you find
The Tide of Passion at its lowest Ebb,
And Reason in her turn begin to flow. (*Exeunt severally.*)

S C E N E

SCENE III.

Changes to another Part of the Grove.

Enter Barzanes, who discovers Antiochus on the Ground in a melancholy Posture.

Bar. Poor Prince! how like a blasted Oak he lies,
That long has winter'd out the various Shocks,
And all the dire Malignity of Heav'n!
Till frequent Strokes the fibrous Roots divide,
And bear th' imperial Ruin to the Ground.
But see! he moves, and something from within
Awakes the Viper that thus stings his Heart,
And preys upon his Entrails. Here I'll stand:
Perhaps his Soul unguarded and alone,
May drop some Circumstance to guide Enquiry.

Antiochus rises.

Ant. Ambition! No, their Politicks are out,
If in their idle Fancies they suppose
Antiochus's Soul thirsts after Greatness.
The Empire of the World wou'd but support
A Wretch, were I the Monarch. No, my Heart,
If e're thou prov'ft rebellious, these my Hands
Shall tear thee out, and scourge thee for thy Treason.

*(He takes a Picture-case out of his Pocket,
opens it, and looks earnestly upon the Picture.)*

Oh, how divinely fair! Here Sweetness heightens
Modesty, whilst Majesty loses itself

In

In Beauty. This, *Theban*, is thy Masterpiece.

Bar. A Picture, hah! (*Aside.*)

There lies the Myſt'ry: now's the Time to ſooth
His Heart, and ſteal by Sympathy of Paſſion
The lurking Secret——but hold.

Ant. Yet how tormenting! (*Coming forward to the Audience.*)
Why was I made a Man, t' endure the Storms
Of batt'ring Reason, and the Senſe of Duty?
O, that the Heavens had revers'd my Doom,
When firſt they form'd this human Composition,
And caſt me in a low inferior Mould;
Indu'd me with th' unerring Inſtinct of
The grazing Herd, or any Thing beneath
The Sphere of Reason, or the Senſe of Man!
Then had I been a happy Neuter made
To all falſe Show of Blifs, and real Pain.
The Worms, and meaner Reptiles of the Earth,
Are happier far than I. Th' unreas'ning Nature
Enjoys its Being ſafe from Hope or Fear,
And runs unbiaſ'd to it's deſtin'd End.
But Oh, how dark! how intricate's the Path
That leads to Man's Deſire! Wretched *Antiochus*!

Bar. Now for my Part. ——— (*To Antiochus.*)
Who talks of Wretchedneſs when I am here,
The very Source of Wretchedneſs and Sorrow?
But if thou art ſo vain to vie with me
In Miſ'ry, tho' the Tryal gives thee Glory;
Thou'lt find a ſingle Heart ſo richly fraught,
'Twill make thee burſt with Envy.

Ant. Whoe'er thou art, thou talk'ſt in ſuch a Strain,
As leaves a doubt upon my wav'ring Thought.

E

Strange

Strange are thy Words, and yet thy Voice familiar;
 The Tone seems obvious to my Ear, but then
 The Purport of thy Speech belies my Sense.
 Is't possible——

The once lov'd Prince of *Cappadocia*,
 Sworn Brother, Friend, Companion to *Antiochus*,
 In all the gayer Pleasures of his Youth,
 Shou'd thus appear——

In all this Ostentation of Despair?
 Is't possible? Let me peruse thy Face,
 And make my Eyes a Witness to that Truth,
 My doubtful Ears suspect.

Bar. Amazement strike me!

What my *Antiochus*, my Friend disguis'd!
 How art thou chang'd! how alter'd from thyself,
 From that *Antiochus*!——

That with his warlike Sports wou'd wake the Morn,
 Wou'd lash the glaring Tygres from her Young,
 And drive her o'er the Mountains; who was wont
 To grapple with the furious Lion's Paw,
 And deck his Shoulders with the shaggy Spoil:
 Or when at *Athens* in his calmer Hours,
 At the *Lyceum*, or the crowded Porch,
 His subtle Questions poz'd the wrangling *Greeks*.

Ant. Ah, Friend! too well thou dost the Diff'rence
 find,

And yet methinks in thee I see the Change,
 The self-same Change that thou observ'st in me:
 Or else the sparkling Mirrour of thy Eye
 Darts back myself, and by Reflection gives
 My own sad Looks I fancy to be thine.

Sure

Sure nothing less than Love cou'd work this Change.

Bar. What heav'nly Impulse guides thee to the Truth?
If there's a Sympathy in all our Passions,
Which makes us think, and talk, and act alike,
And gives our Looks the very same Resemblance,
Then the same Tyrant holds us both enslav'd.
Yes, thy *Barzanes* lives (if that be Life)
A Slave to Beauty, without Hopes a Slave!
This none but my *Antiochus* cou'd plead
A Right to know; my Bosom kept this Flame
So close, it shou'd have dy'd for Want of Vent.
But he whose Heart conceals one lurking Thought,
Defrauds his Friend.

Ant. And dost thou love, my Brother?
Approach yet closer to this faithful Heart,
And let me clasp thee till we both incorporate:
May not I know the Story of thy Love?
Give me her Name, her History; tell me all:
That from the true Description of her Charms,
I may be taught t'adore the absent Beauty,
Who thus has fir'd the Bosom of my Friend.
Come let's convey us to some close Retreat,
To whisp'ring Trees, cool Grottos, murm'ring Brooks,
To Shades that seem alone design'd for Lovers;
There with each other interchange our Souls,
Indulge our Hopes, and bid farewell to Sorrow.

Bar. Indulge our Hopes! there's Musick in thy
Voice:

Let me embrace thee for the glorious Thought.
Now thou begin'st to shew thyself a Prince,
To stem thus bravely the rough Tide of Passion,

And struggling rise victorious from the Conflict;
 Behold, what Awfulness, what pow'ful Charm
 Attends on virtuous Greatness in Distress!
 Perils of ev'ry Kind respect the Brave,
 Whom Death sometimes ambitious is to spare,
 And Fortune seeks Occasion to Advantage.
 Thus the wise Serpents spar'd the young *Alcides*,
 The Flood *Deucalion*, the Sword *Alexander*,
 And mightier Love shall learn to spare *Antiochus*.

Ant. Hard is the Task, my Friend, to sigh alone:
 Sorrow pent up but aggravates the Grone:
 But when Companions in our Grief we find,
 The mournful Harmony relieves the Mind.

(*Exeunt.*)

End of the second Act.



ACT III.



ACT III. SCENE I.

The Grove of Daphne.

Enter Arsinoe, and Cleone.

Ars. I Own the Charge, that he was first my Choice,
And all my Thoughts were center'd in *Tigranes*,
Back'd by the good Opinion of *Seleucus*.
And still his Merit justifies Pretension
To all the *Syrian* Monarch can bestow.
So far we both agree. But O, *Cleone*!
Love is a strong Delusion of the Mind,
Which will admit of no pedantick Rules
For it's Confinement: We as well may ask
Counsel to regulate Madness, as Love.
What must be, must be, and we ne'er shou'd argue
For mere Necessity, its own Power
Being a full Warrant for the Act.

Cle. But yet,

Arsinoe must conceive a nobler Pleasure
In acting, where not only Choice, but Justice
Demands it of her; 'tis because we ought,
As well as must, shou'd heighten the Enjoyment,
And add a Lustre to each Change of Fancy.

Ars. Well, I submit, and, thou may'st be assur'd,
Am eas'ly reconcil'd to what I wish. —
Sure Solitude and Love so recommend

Fach

30 *ANTI OCHUS.*

Each other, that 'tis hard to know the Cause
From the Effect; if Love disposes us
To Solitude, or to it owes its Birth:

At least it ne'er had Charms for me before.

But now methinks the proudest Works of Art,
When measur'd by the high arch'd Grove, or sweet
Enamel'd Mead, so shrink at the Comparison,
As if the Gods had only taught Men Arts
To be a Foil to Nature, and enhance
The Beauty of their own fair Works.

Cle. The Birds and murm'ring Waters join their
Musick,

And Nature in this unaffected Dress,
At ev'ry Turn unfolds new Scenes of Pleasure.

Arf. And we'll enjoy the Whole. — But stay, ye
Pow'rs! (*Takes up the Picture-case, opens it,
and peruses it in a profound Contemplation.*)

What's this I find? — O, how my Fancy works
Thro' all the vast Infinity of Thought,
This Myst'ry to unfold! and yet methinks
The mere Discovery of so rich a Prize
Shou'd well convince my puzzled Thoughts, and tell me,
Nought less than *Syria* can the Loss sustain.

'Tis she, *Cleone*. See! the Air—the Look—

Of our new *Macedonian*: Yes,— 'tis she! —

O, my prophetick Fears! with how much Pains
Each Feature is compos'd to foil the Original!

What Pow'r of Art to represent

Nature excell'd! and then the Workmanship!

Such an Extravagance! —

No Pow'r but that of Love could e'er invent,

And

And none but that of Empire e're perform.

Cle. And since we know that these two Pow'rs
complete

Reign in the Breast of our great King *Seleucus*,
And that on Earth there is none left that dares
To rival him; how can we doubt from whom
It came, when it so evidently bears the Marks
At once of Love, and Empire?

Arf. Of Love, I grant it; if so foul a Flame
Kindled in Hell can e're deserve that Title.

Seleucus! poor, deluded, good old King!

My Life on't he's a perfect Stranger here.

Each Circumstance fully convinces me:

The Richness of the Case,—This vast Profusion

Of all its Ornaments, and then the Place

Sacred to *Daphne*, where he still resides;

All, all convince me, 'tis the Prince himself,

He the sole Cause of this, and this the Cause

Of all this Affectation of Retirement.

Oh! rid me of my Doubts.

Cle. Nay, if you think

These are sufficient Grounds for your Suspicion,

The Truth of it may eas'ly be discover'd.

Take but the Picture out (for that's the Jewel

More priz'd than all the Rest) and in its Place

Inclose your own; the Change will soon discover

The Truth of your Conjecture. Now's the Time

To find him thoughtful and alone.

Arf. Well advis'd: (*Changes Pictures, and puts the
Case into her Bosom.*)

And Fortune seems to favour the Design.

Give

Give me my own—now for th' Experiment.
 See both exactly of a size. I'll make it
 Glare so fully in his Sight; he must, he shall
 Observe it. And then will I rivet both
 My Eyes to his, and catch each diff'rent Motion;
 O, I shall surely find a Clew will lead me
 Thro' the dark Maze of his profoundest Thoughts!

Cle. His Negligence, or his Concern will shew
 Either his Guilt, or Innocence.

Arf. Tis true.
 But O, how beats my aking Heart, for Fear
 My strong Suspicions shou'd be real!—
 And if they are, what Folly is't in me
 To take such Pains to make me still more wretched.
 But if this foolish Cunning here shou'd find
 The Truth of what I fear; nought but Despair
 And Madness can ensue. But I perceive
 The Prince advancing towards us: I must seem
 Quite unconcern'd. Retire a while, *Cleone*.

Enter Antiochus.

Ant. Sure I must drop it here! strange negligence
 (*Aside.*

Of what one holds most dear! but cease, my Eyes,
 Your farther Search. See there! and to regain it
 Undiscover'd, must be the Point.—How fares it
 With *Arfmoë*?—

Arf. Always in Health, my Lord, when I perceive
 You in the soft pursuit of Pleasures;—
 And such these Scenes afford, more perfect far
 Than all the Pomp and Splendor of a Court.

Ant.

Ant. To you indeed they can't but seem delightful,
Whose sprightly Temper corresponds with all
The smiling Trains of innocent Delights.
As for my part, they are no more to me
(But that I reap from them my Solitude)
Than a mere Dungeon, cou'd I there be sure
Of th' absence of Mankind.

Arf. Then much I fear,
My bold Intrusion has disturb'd you, Sir.

Ant. O, no, *Arfinoe*! spite of all my Sorrows,
Your presence still is most agreeable:
The Love I bear the generous *Tigranes*,
Must sure extend to all his Heart holds dear.

Arf. O, how he kills me with that hated Name!
But I must bear it. (*Aside.*)

Ant. By your leave, fair Cousin.

Arf. What, pray Sir, is your Pleasure?

Ant. To peruse
That curious Work you in your Bosom wear,
Which at a Distance seems a Master-piece:
May I presume to take a nearer View?

Arf. As rich as it appears, my gracious Lord,
I owe it to mere Chance. (*Giving it him.*)

Ant. The Gods, and Fortune
Are still propitious to the Fair. I'm even
With Admiration struck; the Fashion seems
Most new, and the Contrivance most ingenious.

Arf. 'Twas a strange Accident; and still more
strange,
That he who spar'd no Cost on the Performance,
Shou'd bear the Loss with Silence.

F *Ant.*

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Ant. Certainly.

But whilst the Owner keeps it as a Secret,
Permit me, gentle Cousin, to possess it,
Till I can get the Pattern imitated.

Arf. As 'tis a Master-piece, my Lord, ———
I hold it in no small Esteem; but yet
You may command it, Sir: I'll share it with you:
Let me take out the Picture.

Ant. Excuse me.

Since you entrust me with the most important,
Think not to rob me of the meaner Part,
The Picture; but dear Cousin, suffer me
T' amuse my Sorrows; Painting ever had
A Charm to please me.

Arf. Then pray, good my Lord,
Give me your Judgement, for the Paint within
Is no less curious than the Workman's Art;
The Lines are tender, but yet strong.

Ant. No doubt.

But give me leave when Contemplation's free,
To make perusal; in my calmer Hours
I may perhaps form a true Judgement of it,
And find out Beauties, haste wou'd overlook.

Arf. But cast one Look, my Lord, one careless
Glance.

If he denies, all my Designs are vain. (*Aside.*)
'Twill stand the Test of Criticism; and besides,
Antiochus is well acquainted with the Face.

Ant. Therefore a Time more proper I'd consult:
And since I have before me, gentle Cousin,
So perfect an Original, 'tis ill Manners
To dwell upon a Copy.

Arf.

Arf. Fye, my Lord,
I fancy'd you too serious for a Jest;
But if I must resign it to your Pleasure,
Some fairer Opportunity shall give me
Your free Opinion on the Subject.

Ant. Cousin, farewell. (*Exit Arfinoe.*)
I thank thee Heart, for once 'twas well dissembled,
And now for ever I absolve thee from
The low mean Trick, the Coward's boasted Shift,
And half th' ambiguous Politician's Craft.

Enter Stratonice.

But see! 'tis she, the true Original!
Fantaſtick Nature! how my trembling Soul
Sickens at her desir'd Approach; like the
Expiring Mortal, that shrinks, and draws back
Ev'n from the heav'nly Joys that lie before him. (*Aside.*)

Stra. O, my Heart!
How like a captive Bird it beats around
The narrow Cage, tiring itself in vain,
To gain that Freedom she despairs to find. (*Aside.*)
What do I see! was ever such a Change! (*Seeing Antiochus.*)
O piteous Sight! at this the flinty Eye
Of Cruelty might drop a Tear, and yet
Not violate her bloody Character,
Your trembling Limbs, my Lord, and hollow Eyes,
Proclaim some ling'ring Wretch surpris'd in Death.
I fear I have unhappily increas'd
Your Illness, which I came in hopes to Cure.

Ant. O, *Stratonice*!
Your kindness comes, like Heaven's, so unexpected,
F 2 Undeserv'd,

Undeserv'd,
 That well my Soul, unconscious of Desert,
 May doubt, and stagger, and scarce dare to think
 How much she's bless'd. But since your gen'rous Pity
 Now brings you here t'endeavour at the Cure
 Of my Distemper, still extend it farther
 By suff'ring the Concealment; which disclos'd
 Wou'd aggravate my Pains, and render me,
 If possible, more miserable.

Stra. My Lord,
 The Gods ne'er pour their Vengeance but on those
 Who bid Defiance to their sacred Laws,
 Dealing in Wrongs, and impiously declaring
 Their Hatred to them. But *Antiochus*,
 Bred up, and nourish'd in the School of Virtue,
 Born ev'n for its Defence, shou'd banish all
 Such idle Fears, and hope for endless Blessings.

Ant. Which only she can give. [*Aside*]-Oh, *Stratonice*!
 Rather inform me that at length the King
 Gives way to my disastrous Fate, consents
 That in retiring from the gaudy Crowd,
 I may endeavour to regain that Ease
 He seems so much to wish.

Stra. Alas! the King
 So builds his Quiet on your Ease and Welfare,
 That he can never entertain a Thought
 Will stand in Competition with the Love
 He bears you. But since you my Thoughts require,
Antiochus shou'd never sure indulge
 The Hopes of having what, if gain'd, must flow
 From the deep Anguish of a Father's Spirit;

Of

Of such a Father! who wou'd ransack all
This Earth for your Repose; and if unable
To find it here, wou'd weary all the Gods,
And search beyond the Barriers of the World.

Ant. And can he then refuse my last Request?

Stra. And can you, Sir,
Ask but the only Thing that will undo him?

Ant. If but the only Thing that I can ask,
Be but the only Thing can be deny'd me,
Then must I be eternally involv'd
In Woes, and languish out a Life of Sorrow. (*Going.*)

Stra. O, stay, my Lord, nor urge your Fate so far!
Will you complain for ever of your Sorrows,
And still conceal the Cause? be still, still obstinate?
Once more I beg, upon my Knees implore.

Ant. Hold, Heav'ns! you must not kneel. (*Turning to her.*)

Stra. Indeed, my Lord,
I do remember there was once a Time
(But sure 'twas all Illusion, a meer Dream)
When, without all these Forms,
Antiochus was us'd to more Compliance,
And *Stratonice* cou'd not ask in vain.

Ant. And never shou'd, —
Were but the Effects of her Commands confin'd
Within the Circle of my own undoing:
But as it necessar'ly must involve
The good, the wise, the innocent, and virtuous,
Forgive me, Madam, if I still persist,
Am still more covetous of possessing that,
Which but once open'd, like the fatal Box,
Wou'd pour a multitude of Mischiefs forth.
Consider, Madam,

Stra.

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Stra. Well I have already
Consider'd, and can find no other Means
For your Recovery, but to know the Cause.
Let all the World share in the dire Effects,
So it relieve *Antiochus*.

Ant. O, my Princess!
You are too good; but ah! too soon, I fear,
You will repent, thus seemingly to urge
My happier Fate.

Stra. O, never: the removal
Of your Distress, and the return of Health,
Must amply recompense that Train of Ills,
You fancy will attend, let 'em proceed
From whatsoever Passion. If Ambition,
The King your Father——

Ant. Gods! name not Ambition.
My Father wants not that can satisfy
The proudest Heart.

Stra. If then—perhaps—from Love.----
You sigh, my Lord, when I but mention Love.

Ant. O, *Stratonice*, cease to urge me farther,
Nor drive my Grief beyond the last Retreat:
It wounds Remembrance when I think upon it:
I cannot speak it. O, forgive this Silence,
And spare my Shame.

Stra. Then Love has caus'd your Sufferings, and has
plaid
The Tyrant all this while.

Ant. Alas, too sure!
At length you've torn the Secret from my Soul;
But never, never can I dare to name her.

Stra.

Stra. For that, *Antiochus*, we'll spare your Scruples ;
Give but some Mark, some short Description of her.

Ant. Give some Description ! O, the pleasing Theme !
But why ? she's destin'd to another's Arms ;
Distracting Thought ! to whom I owe my Life.

Stra. So far it opens just as I cou'd wish. *(Aside.)*

Ant. And now to make my Miseries complete,
In thus anticipating Time, and hast'ning
The Hand of Justice, balancing the Scale
Of my Offence with equal Punishments ;
See here---this will---(but first remember, Madam,
(Takes out the Picture-case.)

'Tis in obedience to your high Commands,
I thus unfold myself) this will inform you,
Of what shou'd ne're have issu'd into Light,
By any other Influence but your own :
This will disclose the Anguish of my Soul ;
Will represent the Fountain whence it flows,
And lead you through the Maze of all my Suff'rings.
Now, Fate, thou hast caught me. *(Gives her the Case.)*

Stra. No, my Lord, believe,
The Confidence that you repose in me,
Shall never make your Fate more piteous.---
Now for the Proof---Hope doubts, and Fear grows
desperate.

I long to look, and yet I dread it too. *(Aside.)*

*She opens the Case with some Difficulty, and sees
the Picture.*

But see, my Stars ! what Form is this ? The Princess
Arfinoe ? Fatal Discovery !

But he shall never see my Weakness ; no,
I'll yet conceal it tho' it strangles me.

My

My trembling Hands a while refus'd their Office,
Seem'd to forbid my Eyes this rash Enquiry,
And chid 'em from the Object. (*Aside.*)

Ant. Now Fate works.

Stra. O, that I'd never urg'd him to reveal it!

Ant. But, Madam, 'tis too late; yet not too late.

(*Overbearing.*)

To punish this audacious Breast, that durst
Presume to cherish such a glorious Flame.
Here is my Sword, and if it can but find
A Place that's yet untortur'd——

Stra. Pray, my Lord——

Ant. I see too plain I ought to have been silent;
But since this rash Confession has displeas'd you,
Think, Madam, that the Fault is all your own,
Mine the Misfortune.

Stra. I must own, my Lord,
Your Choice here seems to give me some Surprise;
But yet I cannot apprehend the Cause,
Why you, who reign o'er ev'ry Heart in *Antioch*,
Shou'd thus enjoin yourself this painful Silence.

Ant. Such an Assurance doubtless wou'd have made
A quick Discovery of my early Passion.

But, Madam,——

Flatter me not with Hopes of such an Empire.

Stra. Well, Prince, I'm much beholding to this
Picture

For what I know, and, as I'm bound in Honour,
Shall use my best Endeavours to assist you.

Ant. But, Madam, render back, I beg, that Treasure:
My Love demands it as the only Prize
Can soften my Despair.

Stra.

Stra. My Lord, you need not
Be any ways concern'd about its Safety,
But from another's Hand you must receive it.

Ant. Another's Hand! and can you then deny't me?
O, unsuspected Cruelty! yet know,
Inhuman fair one! tho' you rob my Eyes
Of the most charming Object they e're boasted,
You cannot tear its Image from my Heart;
'Tis there in flaming Characters ingrav'd
On Adamant; 'tis there I will adore thee,
Thou dear Resemblance of the fairest Form,
Fair as the first Idea of Perfection.
There with most solemn Vows——

Stra. Your Speech, my Lord,
Now swells into Extravagance,——farewell.
(*Exit* Stratonice.

Ant. She's gone, and as she went methought those Eyes
Flash'd with Disdain, that us'd to shine upon me,
Soft as the Mildness of the gilded Morn.
Now to the King she blabs the horrid Tale,
And with her *Siren's* Tongue and Eloquence
Of Beauty, aggravates ev'n Incest. Now
Thou art a Wretch indeed, *Antiochus*!
Fool that I was to trust her with a Secret,
Which 'tis her Sex's Nature to abuse.
Must then the Lover's Heart in Silence break,
Or he be doubly curs'd that dares to speak?

(*Exit.*

End of the third Act.

G

A C T



A C T IV. S C E N E I.

Enter Arsinoe and Cleone.

Ars. **I**T must be what I fear. — And yet, *Cleone*,
 With all my Cunning, and nice Observation,
 I cou'd not trace by any outward Gesture,
 The least Impression of his inward Grief;
 But that a gen'ral Sorrow quite possesses him,
 Is obvious to all. — It vexes me
 To leave an Enterprize, so well begun,
 Half finish'd.

Cle. The next convenient Interview
 May give what you cou'd wish.

Ars. What I cou'd wish?
 Rather what I shou'd most abhor. — O could I
 Forbear the Search, and shun the dang'rous Tryal,
 I might be happy yet, *Cleone*; happy
 In one, whose Vows you know I've oft' receiv'd;
 In one, who now ev'n dotes to Madness on me.

Enter Tigranes, at a Distance.

Cle. And see! methinks his Passion well deserves
 Your Pity still, tho' not perhaps your Love.

Ars. Now one wou'd think Fate points me out the Path
 Wherein I shou'd direct my Steps, and go
 To happier Climes. But I am lost, *Cleone*,
 And must not enter, tho' I see the Harbour.
 Retire. You know my settled Purpose is

To

To sift at all Events our late Discovery,
And found the Depth of Fate.

Cle. I pity you. (Exit Cleone.)

Tig. It is for this, *Arfinoe*, to be thus (advancing.)
Receiv'd, the harrafs'd Soldier smiles beneath
The sultry Dog-star, or the driving Hail,
And snatches Lawrel from the Hand of Danger;
Directing Glory to its proper Aim,
To Love, despising Life to live indeed.

Arf. Tho' at another Time I might endure
This Whirl of Passion, yet, my Lord, 'tis Death
To Love, to be untimely urg'd; its Birth,
Its Life it owes to proper Opportunity.

*Tigranes comes forward to Arfinoe, who walks carelessly
by him as out of Humour.*

Tig. What has *Tigranes* done, that his Approach
Shou'd raise a Frown on fair *Arfinoe's* Brow?
That Look with double pointed Fury glanc'd,
Both wounds with Love, and kills me with Disdain.
—Say, my divine *Arfinoe*, must that Breast,
Which us'd to open, and receive my Vows,
Be stopt at last, and made impregnable
To all the tender Overtures of Love?——
—Enough, *Tigranes*, thou art guilty found,
And ev'n her Silence does the Sentence give.

Arf. Alas, *Tigranes*, you are strangely alter'd!
What is it that has ruffled thus your Temper?
You cannot say my Tongue has e're provok'd you:
No, I am sure, *Tigranes* self's my Witness.

Tig. I am your Witness, and can safely say,
That nothing e're proceeded from those Lips,

But softest Accents, most harmonious Sounds;
When from your Tongue divine *Ambrosia* dropt,
Food for the God of Love.

Arf. Well, my Lord,
I'm sorry I shou'd see you thus displeas'd,
But glad I'm not the Cause on't.

Tig. O, my Princess!
Mistake me not; say not that I'm displeased:
Amazement; not Displeasure strikes my Breast.
This all Mankind is subject to, when something,
Among the common Accidents of Life,
Most unexpected happens.

Arf. Amazement truly!
What Novelty can thus affect the wise
Tigranes, whose Philosophy, and Practice,
In all the vast Variety of Nature,
Must nobler Thoughts infuse? For Admiration
Is but at best the Proof of Inexperience.
It must be new indeed to raise your Wonder,
Scarce a Day old.

Tig. O, Madam, not an Hour!
Few Moments have disclos'd this dreadful Meteor,
Portending swift Destruction. — Now I feel
A thorough Dissolution all within me,
And Nature just expiring. — O, *Arsmoe*!

Arf. Methinks you act this Passion wond'rous well;
So natural, and so strange th' Effect appears,
That were my Eyes not witness to the Error,
I shou'd myself suppose a Cause prodigious;
Some such unheard of Monster in the Skies,
As your wild Fancy paints. But see around us,
Are not the Heavens in their usual Motions?

Or shine they not with proper Ornaments?
An Object more of Pleasure, and Delight,
Than of Despair and Horror.

Tig. Why this may
Do well perhaps among the gawdy Flies
That buz about a Court, that sigh and look
By Rule; and with some stale Conceit,
Can quirk and quibble on a Smile, or Frown.
But as my genuine Passion knows no Art,
I'll to the King, lay my Disgrace before him,
Render him back these new created Honours,
Tell him, *Tigranes* is not fit to wear them;
More worthy Burthens, like the servile Ass
Laden with Stripes, Derision, Scorn, and Folly;
With all the Malice Woman can invent,
To wound, and trifle with a faithful Heart.
But I'll no longer bear't.

Arf. And yet, he must not go
So ill resolv'd.—O, stay, *Tigranes*, stay!

Tig. What *Siren's* Voice is that so sweetly wounds,
And sings destructive Pleasure to my Ears?
Stay! — O, *Arfinoe*, repeat that Word!
And shall I stay?

Arf. But one short Moment stay.

Tig. A Moment! O, the precious Drop of Time!
Inestimable Pearl! of greater Value,
Than what the orient Seas so proudly boast of.

Arf. My Lord *Tigranes*,——
Not to detain you, hear but one Request.
Since we must part, at least let's part in Friendship:
Tho' Love has no Dominion, no Pretence
To rule a Soldier's Heart, let Friendship sway,
Friendship

46 *A N T I O C H U S.*

Friendship the true and solid Part of Love.

Arfinoe but desires *Tigranes* Friendship,

In lieu of all his Promises, his Vows.

Tig. What strange Delusion hangs upon your Tongue?

Am I deceiv'd? Tell me, O, tell me true!

Have I e're shewn the least Relapse in Love?

What is my Passion? Has *Tigranes* acted

More like a Tyrant Soldier than a Lover?

O cease to rack me with unjust Suspicion!

Arf. Be not deceiv'd, my Lord, give me your Hand,

And sign the happy Contract.

Tig. Give my Hand!

Sure the blest Moment is again return'd,

In Pity to my Suff'rings and my Pain.

Ye Gods! the Fountain whence such Raptures spring,

(Takes her by the Hand.)

Can't be from Earth; 'tis Heav'n is in this Touch.

Arf. Thro' Life all Happiness from Friendship flows,

Our Joys it doubles, and divides our Woes.

The few that once its sov'reign Virtue prove,

Will never let it dwindle into Love.

I go, and leave you with these Thoughts possess'd.

(Exit Arfinoe.)

Tig. Possess'd indeed! what am I, Fool, or Madman?

Sure both in being a Lover. Strange it is,

That I, with all my Faculties about me,

Healthy, and strong, both knowing, and perceiving,

Shou'd perish thus, ev'n with my own Consent,

And drink large Draughts to my Destruction.

But, like the Viper, thou shalt bring the Cure,

And prove thyself the best Restorative:

Yes, thy false Heart the Antidote supplies,

For all the pleasing poison of thy Eyes.

(Exit.)

S C E N E

S C E N E

Changes to an Apartment in the Palace.

Enter Tigranes.

Tig. If Lovers of Necessity must bear
Variety of Passions; why 'tis well,——
And happy they who with Content can bear 'em.
And sure if such Extreams can often vary,
Our Passions round the Circle may be tost,
And end where they begun; from Love to Hope,
From Hope to Fear, from Fear to Jealousy;
Still shifting round, till by some strange Event,
They meet again, and center all in Love.

Enter Seleucus, Stratonice, &c.

Soft Musick.

Sel. Cease your unwelcome Strains, for when the Mind
By Sorrow is untun'd, all Harmony
Is harsh, and grates the Ear. *Attend Tigranes.*

Tig. So please your Majesty.

Sel. I do observe
Strange Discontent hang low'ring on thy Brow:
The usual Seat of Mirth, and Chearfulness.
Unfold to me the Reason; flows it from
A Mind oppress'd by some domestick Grievance,
Or from a gen'rous Spirit, apt to share
The Afflictions of a Friend?

Tig. The wise *Seleucus*
Well reads the sad Inscription on my Brow:
And Cause enough; for when the Fountain's troubl'd,
The murm'ring Stream, still flowing from above,
Descends impure, and fouls the distant Channel.

When

48 *ANTIOCHUS.*

When the King mourns, how should *Tigranes* smile?
And yet I'll not unfold the real Cause,
My late Repulse, till a more warm Attack
Shall make her still more obstinate, and then
The Gods thro' me shall blast her. *(Aside.)*

Sel. Ev'n now
Thy Soul, productive of a painful Birth,
Labours in utmost Agony.

Tig. And sure
All loyal Hearts should beat thus, thus to see
The Brow of Majesty with a sad Cloud
Of Sorrow overcast. What must he feel,
Who ne'er was yet acquainted but with Joy,
Stranger to all its Opposites?

Sel. Tigranes,
Thy troubled Looks presage some dire Event,
The certain Prologue of a woful Tale.
Come on then, whether I'm prepar'd, or not,
For such a Hearing; give me its full Force,
Each Word its proper Emphasis; nor think
To sooth me with a superficial Story.
How fares it with my Son?

Tig. Alas, dread Sir!
Since 'tis your Pleasure thus to urge your Sorrows,
I must unfold the Truth.—
The Prince is gone, inevitably gone;
Antiochus to all the World is lost,
Lost to himself, beyond the feeble Pow'r
Of Mortals to retrieve. Lately I found him
Under the Covert of a mournful Cypress,
In all the Agonies of wild Despair.
At first indeed methought a gentle Calm
Seem'd to assuage his fluctuating Breast;

And

And for a while from his deliberate Tongue
Distinguishable Accents gently flow'd :
But when I thought to reach the very Cause,
Talk'd of what seem'd most natural to sooth
His aking Breast, immediately awak'd
The drowzy Storm, that by Degrees work'd up
Itself into a Tempest in his Brain.

Then in the Height of Frenzy flinging from me,
With furious Strength he shot into the Wood.

Sel. Enough, enough, ye Gods! too sure Presage
Of my prophetick Fears! but why, alas!
Do we delay the Means of Preservation?
This righteous Heav'n allows, and recommends
To prop weak Nature with the Pow'rs of Art.
Go, summon the Physicians, tell 'em all
To use their utmost Skill in Consultation.
Call in great *Erasistratus*, whose firm
Try'd Virtue dignifies his Art; in War
The King's Companion, and his Friend in Peace.

(*Exit Tigranes.*)

And you, O fair one! (whom the bounteous Gods
Have giv'n to sooth my Suff'rings) you I beg
Wou'd silently repair to th' mournful Grove,
That hides my wand'ring Son; and there inform him
(For he will listen to your softer Accents,
More than to all the Rhet'rick of Philosophy)
Tell him what anxious Cares, with direful Tortures
Distract the feeling Bosom of his Father;
Tell him with open Arms he waits t' embrace him.
Your smoother Language may perhaps subdue
His stubborn Breast, and win him to my Presence.

Str. I go, my Lord, and nothing shall be wanting
In me to urge him strictly to his Duty,

H

And

And make I hope a full Discovery.

Sel. Thanks,—injur'd Maid! ———

Str. Little he thinks I know too much already;
Yet I must hoard it as the choicest Evil,
Till from Probation's School I can resolve
To be confirm'd in Misery,— (*Aside as she is going off.*

(*Exit Stratonice.*

Sel. And well may I say injur'd,
When ev'ry Hour her glowing Cheeks upbraid me
For cold neglect, still silently proclaiming
My lazy Progress to the nuptial Bow'r.
But, O, impute it, fair one, to my Sorrows!
For whilst this Damp lies heavy at my Heart,
The Flame expires, and all within is dark.
Let but kind Heav'n these gloomy Clouds disperse,
And ease me wretched in my Son's Distress;
The Embers, thus enliven'd, would resume
Their wonted Heat, and glow thro' ev'ry Vein.

Thus the gay Spring by various Turns is lost,
Or hid in Snow, or nipt by envious Frost.
But when the Sun revolving in his Sphere,
Darts genial beams, and thaws the frozen Year;
The spreading Trees, and gawdy Flow'rs revive,
And Nature smiling says, Once more we live. (*Exit.*



ACT V. SCENE I.

Enter Stratonice, and Phenissa.

Str. **H**OW have I labour'd for my own undoing!
Tracing thro' all the Labyrinth of Fate
With studious Care the subtle Clew, that leads

To

To the dark Dungeon of Despair and Death.
 And now the magick Thread forlakes my Hand
 And there is no Return.—Curse on the Picture,
 And my more fatal Curiosity,
 That lifted up the Eyelid of the Basilisk
 To strike me dead.—Wou'd I cou'd doubt——
 Whilst I cou'd doubt, I was but half unhappy,
 And kept at Bay the meagre Fiend Despair:
 But Knowledge has illuminated now
 The Cave, where black Destruction lurks, and forces
 On me the glaring Scene of Misery behind.

Pbe. Wou'd to the Gods the happy Gift was mine,
 To sooth your Thoughts, and dissipate these Horrors.

Stra. It is, *Phenissa*: Thou remember'st well,
 That in our Syrian Wars with Joy I snatch'd
 Thee trembling from the Priest's uplifted Knife;
 A Captive sacred to my Brother's Shade.
 The sole Return I then exacted, was
 An Oath, by vengeful *Mazaroth* and *Teraphim*,
 Your angry Syrian Gods, that thou shou'dst serve me
 In any single Act I shou'd require;
 And now's the fatal Hour.

Pbe. And if I fail
 To act as *Stratonice* shall approve,
 Surrender me unpity'd to that holy
 Tyrant, that call'd his disappointed Cruelty,
 Defrauding Heav'n.

Stra. I ever thought thee faithful.
 But hold, the King! grant me, ye Pow'rs, to hide
 My own Confusion in a calm Recital.

Enter Seleucus and Tigranes.

Sel. So may the Stars of Heav'n propitious smile
 On kneeling Mortals, when they press to know

Their future Doms.

Stra. Be quick, *Disimulation*:
There is but little Time allow'd to teach
My Tongue a Language foreign to my Heart. (*Afide*)

Sel. Say, heav'nly fair one, say, my *Stratonice*,
In what dark Corner have you found the Prince,
Stretch'd on the Ground, as on a Rack, complaining?
Say have you learn'd the Cause of his Iniquitude,
And why he shuns us thus, and mourns in Secret?

Stra. The Case is neither strange nor desperate, Sir.
There needs no Oracle, —
To make th' incredulous World believe a Prince,
Virtuous, and young, to be in Love.

Sel. In Love!

Stra. Believe me, Sir, the Prince's Melancholy
Is but th' Effect of his too violent Passion;
Or rather I shou'd say too rigid Virtue.
For as the Princess, whose distinguish'd Charms
Have made so rich a Conquest, is become
Another's Right by Contract, I presume
His Virtue, brooking not the least Dishonour,
Keeps strong Possession of his noble Soul,
And makes him scorn the very Thing he dies for.

Sel. Bravely resolv'd! for which he shall possess her,
Enjoy his Love, and still protect his Honour.
Yes, hear it, all ye Gods! if ought within
Seleucus's Power can his lost Peace restore,
I shall with Pleasure to his Ease devote it.
Yes, in the Name of Love let him proceed,
Point out the fair one, and pursue her close;
Urge her with ev'ry winning Grace of Youth,
With all the Pow'r of Virtue, and the Pomp
Of Sov'reignty: Be she of low Degree,

Why

Why our Alliance will ennoble her: besides,
 There's Virtue in Humility; or shou'd
 She prove some, Princess of illustrious Birth,
 Deriv'd from Heav'n-born Kings; tell her, *Salenus*
 Shall lay the Spoils of Nations at her Feet;
 Cheap Ransom to redeem his Son's Content.
 Therefore declare to us this fatal Beauty,
 That we may join our Importunities,
 And make the Conquest sure.

Strat. This Case my Lord,
 Will better show the Object of his Flame.

*(Presents to him the Picture-case, he opens
 it, and peruses it for some time.)*

And thus the Task of Duty is perform'd!
 But O, the Task of Love! — my feeble Soul *(Aside.*
 Groans under it, and never will be able
 To quit herself so fairly as in this.
 Yet I will imitate the bright Example
 I've copy'd from the Conduct of my Love;
 Be steadfast in the thorny Paths of Virtue,
 And whilst the dear Delusion charms my Soul,
 I'll learn like him to scorn it tho' it kills me. *(Aside.*

Sel. *(Upon the Knowledge of the Person the Picture
 represents.)*

Thanks to the Gods, and you, my *Stratonice*,
 For now I find what e'er my Empire boasts of,
 My Happiness must flow from Heav'n and thee.
 And now, *Tigranes*, now's the Time will give thee
(Turning to Tigranes.)

A glorious Opportunity, wherein
 Thy Service may be most conspicuous,
 Of more Importance to the Peace of *Syria*,
 Than all thy former Sieges, Battles, Conquests.

Tig.

Fig. Let me no longer live than I may be
Of Service to my King; 'tis your Prerogative,
Dread Sir, to bid, my Glory to obey.

Sel. This Resignation to thy Master's Will
Argues the strictest Loyalty; but know
The Proof I shall demand of thy Obedience
May shock thy Soul; therefore be well prepar'd,
Man thy firm Heart, and summon all thy Virtue.
See there, and say thou can'st resign her Charms,

(Shews him Arsinoe's Picture.)

Quit thy Pretensions howsoever warranted;
So from a fond, effeminate tender Lover,
Become the mighty Guardian of thy Country.

Fig. Take all, my Life——

Sel. No more, I feel thy Pangs;
But yet this fir'y Tryal must be borne;
Since from the Ashes of thy Love shall rise
A *Phoenix* that shall mount thee to the Skies.

(Exit Seleucus leading Stratonice.)

Fig. Quit my Pretensions! yes —— to all her Sex:
In that my Loyalty shall ne'er be question'd,
Were but all other of my King's Commands
So happily to be perform'd as this,
The Stream of Pow'r would flow serenely on,
And Subjects kiss the Hand that thus administers. *(Exit.)*

SCENE III.

Antiochus's Apartment.

He rises leisurely from a Couch with Barzanes.

Ant. O curst Illusion! as I lay entranc'd,
Methought the Heavens open'd to my View,
And all the smiling Gods that hover'd round me
Employ'd

Employ'd their gentle Wings to cool my Soul.
 But now the fiery Lash of Guilt has broke
 My golden Dream, and scourg'd me from *Elysium*.
 Fatal Remembrance! how thou gall'st my Heart!
 My Torture rises in a double Portion,
 And the blest Scene my Fancy wrought, but serves
 To plunge me in a deeper Gulf of Mis'ry.

Bar. Lucky Prefage, my Lord! Heav'n by Degrees
 Designs in this t' advance your Happiness;
 As knowing that a fuller Effluence
 Of beaming Joys, at first, wou'd overcome
 Your dazled Senses, giving Pain with Pleasure.
 But see! with chearful Steps your royal Father
 Advances, to confirm this happy Omen.

Ant. And now the Fit returns, my fev'rish Pulse
 Beats high, and warns me of approaching Fate.

Enter Seleucus.

Sel. Where is this wretched Prince? Now give the
 Winds

Thy Sighs, *Antiochus*, and let them bear 'em
 Upon their dewy Wings beyond the World.
 Be as becomes the purpose of the Day:
 The Sun that rose in Clouds, now points his Beams
 To gild the chearful Noon. Thy Father comes
 To lead, to urge thee to thy Choice, and crown
 With undisturb'd Possession ev'ry Wish.

Ant. How amiable are Joys so warranted!
 But, Sir, Extremes are dang'rous; for of late
 My Soul has, like a Ship, in Storms been tost;
 And from the depth of Sorrow and Despair,
 To be from thence immediately exalted
 To th' highest Pitch of Happiness, is more

Than

Than mortal Sense can bear! The feeble Eye
Bound up in Darkness for a Time, must wait
The slow approach of Day, nor all at once
Dare to throw up its Veil against the Sun.

Sel. Come, come, prepare to meet a joyful Bride,
The blustering Storm is o'er, the Waves subside,
And we shall sail with Pleasure down the Tide,
No Wind shall ruffle, and no Cloud be seen,
To cast a Blemish o'er the bright Serene.

SCENE IV.

Changes to the Princess Arfinoe's Apartment.

Enter Arfinoe and Cleone.

Arf. Distrust, and Jealousy, the Seeds of Madness,
Are now fermenting strongly in my Soul;
Fain wou'd I tear 'em from me! but the more
I strive to break, and harrow them to Pieces,
The faster hold they take, and multiply
By separation. Must I enjoy no Ease,
No Peace, *Cleone?*

Cle. Heav'ns grant you both.

Enter Tigranes.

Arf. O, never, never! whilst that hated Object
Appears before me, 'tis my evil Genius
That haunts me ev'ry where, and is a Bar
To all my future Peace. Let's fly, if possible,

(Attempts to go off.

And shun his presence.

Tig. Madam, I but come, *(Interpasses.*
As you require, to tender you my Friendship.

(She turns disdainfully from him.

Confusion! to be thus despis'd and slighted,

Gods!

Gods! who can bear it? Yes,—for now I find,
I've gain'd my Freedom by it. Therefore, Madam,
I by the King's Command appear before you,
To throw up all Pretensions to that Person.
Once 'twou'd have been, I own, too hard a Task;
But since you've taught me how, I quit 'em all.

(Exit Tigranes.)

Arf. Provoking Insolence! to be slighted thus,
Ev'n by the Man one hates, is Curse enough;
My Pride wont bear it. Now I plainly find
Fate rushes on with so much Violence,
That I must sink out-right, no longer able
To stem the Tide. But see! we are surpris'd.

Enter Seleucus, Antiochus, and Barzanes.

The King, and Prince! what can this mean?

Sel. To lead

The purple Hours dancing with rosy Hebe,
To bid the Sea disgorge his Pearl, the Mines
Their brilliant Stores: As when in full Assembly
Of the Gods, *Jove* tax'd obedient Nature,
To deck the Nuptials of the Queen of Love.

Ant. Of Love! Oh! how my flatt'ring Fate abus'd me!

(In Amazement.)

Sel. Ye Gods! see how his Honour checks his Passion!
But know, my Son, you must not fear a Breach
Of Friendship, in pursuing here your Love:
Tigranes will resign all Happiness,
Resign his Right, and throw up ev'ry Claim.
And see! he comes to engage himself.—

Enter Tigranes.

Ant. Injurious Falshood! how shall I atone (Meeting him.)
For this, at least this seeming Treach'ry,
To my much injur'd Friend?

I

Tig.

Tig. Sir, your Attonement
Is nothing more than your Acceptance there.
You may, my Lord, demand much stronger Proofs
Of my Obedience: take her, she's your own:
My Love is turn'd another way.

Ant. And mine
Was never kindled here.

Sel. See there, *Antiochus*, (*Shewing Arfinoe's Picture.*
And soon your Eyes will contradict your Speech.

Arf. Distraction!— (*Aside.*
Where can this end but in my Shame and Ruin?
In Death, and this from both shall free my Soul.

(*Shews a Dagger.*

Ant. Confusion! sure the Gods are envious grown;
Repent them of the Bounty they've bestow'd
On human Race, and thus withdraw their Blessings.
What do my Eyes behold? Delude me not
With false Appearances. O, no! *Tigranes*,
She's wholly yours: think not this forc'd Compliance
Can ease my Soul: No! take her, take her hence,
And may the Gods defend your right to Beauty.

Tig. Why will you oppose the swelling Stream
Of general Joy? Observe her—mark her well;
See how she stands, and smiles upon her Conquest!

Ant. Her Conquest! no, *Tigranes*, I despise it:
Oh! how shall I convince thee of this Plot,
Contriv'd in Hell to blast my Hopes? But by
The Gods, I'll lay it open to the World.

Arf. Madness! for who can bear it? shall I stoop (*Aside.*
To drag a Life of Shame? No, this shall end it.

Stabs herself, and sinks down upon a Couch.

Sel. What has she done?

Bar. She bleeds.

Arf.

Arf. And now my Fate
Will soon divest me both of Hate and Love.

Tig. I thank ye, Eyes,—this is a decent Tribute:
(*Weeps.*)
Nothing but this cou'd make me sigh at parting.

Ant. Nothing but this cou'd satisfy my Friend
Of my full Innocence. Tho' I bemone
With a just Sorrow her untimely Fall;
Yet Love on such Occasions wou'd demand
Extravagance of Grief; excess of Passion,
Such as wou'd here disclose the hidden Flame,
In spite of Art, and open all the Soul.

Arf. One Moment more I beg but to unravel (*Faintly.*)
Some Points, and I have done: It is but Justice
Death shou'd reform the Errors of my Life.
Know, Sir, this fatal Series of Mistakes
Proceeds from too fond Love I bore your Son.
I blush not, Prince, now to reveal my Weakness:
I cannot if I wou'd; my Blood flows off
Apace, resolv'd to mount my Cheeks no more.
So hear——

That fatal Case, that now I may presume
Contains my Form, I found in your Retirement:
Oh, had it still been there! I open'd it:
My Heart scarce heav'd, and all my Blood ran chill;
My jealous Eye examin'd soon the whole,
And found her out, just as she is, the fair,
The injur'd *Stratonice*.——

Sel. What's this I hear?

Arf. Have Patience, Sir: Enrag'd
At this, my Passion knew no Bounds; I form'd
A thousand odd Chimera's in my Soul:
At length resolv'd, I took her Picture out,

And there inclos'd my own. The Consequence
Is known to all: I can no more—Oh! where—

(*She dies.*)

Ant. Born to be still deceiv'd, I tread the Maze
Of doubtful Life, and now am quite bewilder'd.

Sel. Then Truth at last has broke the subtle Charm.
I read it in his Face; it must be so;
'Tis Guilt that stains his quiv'ring Lips, 'tis Guilt
That gives the haggard Eyes, and slavish Mien:
But here I give all Pity to the Winds,
All little Tricks of Nature to befool us,
To carry on her Work. Yes—he shall fall
The richest, dearest Sacrifice, that cou'd
Be offer'd to the Shrine of injur'd Love.

Tig. Dread Sir, recall your Reason; if *Anti—*

Sel. Hence—

Woud'st thou, *Tigranes*, reason with an Earthquake;
Or dare to thwart the Wirlwind in it's Rage,
When Desolation marks out where it was
Oppos'd? Assist me, Gods, 'tis your own Case,
Who hourly bear so much Ingratitude
From the base Dwarfs whom yesterday you made.
Say, shou'd he not have strangled in its Birth
This Monster-passion, e're it soar'd into
A Prodigy to fright the gaping World?
Was there on Earth such Penury of Beauty?
Or cou'd his wayward Appetite be rais'd
By nothing less than Incest and Rebellion?

Tig. Pardon, *Seleucus*, great *Nicanor*, Pardon,

(*Pointing to Antiochus, who leans upon him in
a languishing Posture.*)

Is this the Image of Rebellion? This?
Does hot ungovern'd Lust wear such a Form?

Alas!

Alas! his feeble Lamp of Life scarce plays,
And the next Breath, nay ev'n friendly Breath,
Perhaps may send it hov'ring from the Socket.
Think how you urg'd yourself this very Suit
Adjur'd aloud the all-recording Gods,
To spare your Son. —

“ Yes, hear it, all ye Gods, if ought within

“ Seleucus' Pow'r can his lost Peace restore,

“ I shall with Pleasure to his Ease devote it.”

Sel. Oh! for a Heart, whose mighty Strings cou'd bear
These strong convulsive Pangs, these Agonies
Of two fierce Passions struggling for the Mast'ry.
I feel once more the warm recurrent Tide
Of soft paternal Blood: I must relieve
His lab'ring Soul, or die beneath the Conflict.
My Son, my Life, *Antiochus!*

Ant. Yes, Sir, (*Raising himself.*)

This hated, this rebellious Son shall turn
His Bosom to your Point, and if I writhe
My Body at the Wound, I'll curse
Th' involuntary Motion. Here, just here
I'll fall: The Circulation of an idle Life
Shall stop where it began.

Sel. What means my Son?

Come once more to my Arms.

Ant. O cherish not (*Starting back.*)

A Viper that will sting you to the Heart!
Behold, dread Sir, the Source of all Misfortunes,
Your Son, your impious Son. The Gods are just,
And Justice they will have: me they require:
This Blood, this treach'rous Blood, that has so long
Offended Heav'n and you, must here be shed,

E're

E're you can find Repose, or Heav'n be calm.

Sel. Peace, Peace; thank Heav'n that still 'tis in
our Pow'r.

I see thy tortur'd Innocence; I feel
Each Pang of struggling Virtue: But 'tis done,—
Resolv'd,—and fix'd as Fate.—Let little Deeds
Be scan'd and weigh'd, but vast stupendous Acts
Abhor Deliberation. Take her now—
For ever thine—thy Queen—thy *Stratonice*.

Tig. Paternal Love, the fav'rite Attribute

(*Apart to Barzanes.*

Of *Jove* himself, shines nobly in the Mind
Of his Vice-gerent here.

Bar. To raise your Wonder
Yet higher, observe the Force of conscious Duty,
That curbs his lab'ring Soul as by Enchantment,
And ties the Tongue from Utterance.

Ant. Oh, my Father!
Amazement strikes me dumb, nor can I hear
Such Goodness lavish'd on a guilty Wretch
Without a strong Reproof to all my Actions:
Therefore 'tis fitter I remain that Wretch,
Be what the Justice of my Fate ordain'd me,
Than from the Clamors of the World incur
A just Reproach to my unworthiness.

Sel. Fear no Reproach: I am myself the World:
Whate'er I justify, the World approves of.
This can reflect no Scandal on thy Fame:
Thy Youth, my Age, her Beauty all plead for thee.
'Twas but the blemish of a fleeting Cloud,
A Shade to set the Light of Honour off.
Thy Father now commands thee to be happy;

Resolve

Resolve but on thy Duty to be happy,
The whole conspiring World shall join to bless us,
Extol thy Virtue, and applaud my Justice.

Ant. And can it be?

Sel. Ev'n so. But see, she comes,
She comes herself, an ample Recompence
For all thy Pain.

Ant. O, why are you so good?

Enter Stratonice.

Stra. Cou'd Life without its Train of Ills subsist, (*Aside.*
Twou'd then be worth our Care; but as it is,
Death is the better Choice: So Drugs work on,
And do your Office soon.

Sel. Madam, you come,
To change this Scene of Death, and give it Life.

Stra. Ha! what is this the Show, the nuptial Pomp?

(*Looking on Arfinoc.*

'Tis true—I dreamt last Night my Obsequies
Were thus expos'd upon the Marriage Bed,
And that the Wedding Torch light up the funeral Pile.
Unhappy Princess—breathless!

Sel. At more Leisure,
You shall be inform'd of this too fatal Story:
The Present we'll employ to better Purpose.
And therefore Madam (to perform a Will,
Which gracious Heav'n, no doubt, at first ordain'd,
That Youth shou'd have no Commerce but with Youth,
Nor taste th' unfavoury Fruits of bitter Age,
Till Time itself shall rip'n it to their Hands)
I here in Justice to your blooming Years,
Resign my Title to you; but resign it
To one of equal Worth, of equal Virtue,
With your fair self; to one who well deserves

The

64 ANTIOCHUS

The Care of Heaven, and Stratonice's Love.
And there, *Antiochus*, behold a Princess,
Equal alone to all th' united Beauties
Of her fair Sex: What hinders then?
Can you resist each other's Virtues? No,
I see you can't.

Antiochus goes to Stratonice and takes her Hand.

Ant. O, most indulgent Father!

Stra. Alas, my Lord! this only helps me forward,
And serves to quicken Fate.

Ant. What means my Princess?

Stra. Had this Proposal, royal Sir, been offer'd
(*To the King.*)

But one Hour sooner—but, alas! tis gone:
The checquer'd Scene of Life is o'er, and Age
And Youth are now alike, and of one Hue.

(*She falls upon a Couch.*)

Sel. Where will this end?

Ant. The Gods have sure reserv'd me
For some unheard-of Wrath ne'er yet in Practice.

(*He kneels before her.*)

O, turn thy Eyes again, and show me Comfort.

Stra. O, Prince! forgive this Rashness, which pro-
ceeded

From a Despair of ever joining thus (*Gives him her Hand.*
My Hand to your's.

Ant. Ye Gods! what Rashness? Speak! (*Rising.*
Or why Despair, the Moment it forsook
My Breast, shou'd enter thine; as if it meant
A double Portion of its Plagues upon me
By thus afflicting thee?—

Stra. O, bear me forward! I am sick to Death.

(*He holds her forward.*)

Wou'd

Wou'd but the meagre Fiend a while relent,
I cou'd a Tale unfold!

Ant. It shall, it shall;
By all the Gods it shall—Be gone, thou Fiend—
Avaunt thou glaring Spectacle of Death.—
O, let me gently pour the Balm of Love (*Kneels again.*
Into thy Soul, and thaw thy freezing Veins!

Stra. O, my dear Lord! I lov'd you, greatly lov'd
you:

But Fear (how great so'er my Passion was)
Aw'd me to silence still.—
And oft' I strove to speak—I cou'd not speak—
My Heart burst forth in Sighs, my Eyes in Tears:
O, did'st thou ne'er observe my streaming Eyes—
Quick Sighs—my fault'ring Tongue?—O, blind, blind,
Love.

Ant. Gods, Gods! I was myself so much in Love,
(*Rising.*

I cou'd not—cou'd not think—I cou'd not see—
And yet I mark'd 'em too—saw the Confusion;
Observ'd your Sighs, observ'd your streaming Eyes:
But what was meant for Love, I constru'd Pity,
Your Pity for my Suff'rings.

Stra. That too, my Lord,
Was deem'd th' Effects of Pity; when I gain'd
The fatal Picture from your trembling Hands;
Then, when my Blood forsook these languid Cheeks,
My Eyes fix'd, gazing, and myself all o'er
A senseless Statue at the killing Sight;
That too you constru'd Pity!

Ant. No, my Love!
For when by long Persuasion you at last

K

Had

Had gain'd from me that fatal Instrument
Of all our Woes, in which you view'd the Form
Of that lost Princess; ignorant of the Cheat

(*Pointing to Arsinoe.*

She then impos'd upon me, I believ'd
Still you beheld your own, your own dear Image:
Then as your Colour chang'd, your Passion rose;
My Fancy form'd it the Effect of Scorn,
Of Anger, and Resentment; my Presumption
(In aiming thus to be so highly blest'd)
Seem'd then to make me odious to your Sight.

Str. And did'st thou love me?

Ant. Ev'n to Madness lov'd thee.

Str. How were we both deceiv'd! —

And now my Soul looks back upon the Wreck
Of all her Hopes, and sees too late her Error.
Had she but waited the Decrees of Heav'n,
Stay'd for those Gales above, she might have then
Been gently wafted to the wish'd-for Coast,
But oh, the sad Reverse! more sad, in that
This after Knowledge now reflects a Scene
Of all the real Joys, my foolish Rashness
Has here depriv'd me of: For but to know
What I have lost! to be thus sensible!
Confounds ev'n Sense itself. — Where am I going? —
A creeping Numbness seals my swimming Eyes.
Hold me — too late — farewell — *Antiochus.*

She sinks upon the Couch.

*Antiochus continues silent for some Time in the
same Posture.*

Sel. Inextricable Fate!

Bar. O, horrid Silence!

(*After some Pause.*

The

The Tempest ceases thus a while, to gather
But stronger Breath, and then we're blown in sunder.

Antiochus rises, supported by Tigranes and Barzanes.

Ant Poison'd, and Dead!—O, no! she is immortal.
Stay, stay, my Princess! stay, my *Stratonice*!
And take me with thee to yon Amaranthine
Bowers, to Fields of flow'ry Asphodel
Where plaintive Lovers to the list'ning Ghosts
Repeat their Story in immortal Youth.—

But why that beck'ning Hand? And now it wafts me
(Starting.

Back to Earth. — Yet, Sir, I'll never lose this Gift,
(Breaking from them.

This precious Gift you made me: No, I'll wander
(Draws his Sword,

Thro' all the lucid Regions of the Worlds,
Or nether Darkness, but I'll still maintain it,
And make Possession strong as is my Love.

(Going to fall on his Sword.)

Pbe. Hold, by the Gods! by *Stratonice's* Life!
She lives— is here — thy *Stratonice* lives.

Ant Thou call'st with such a pleasing Emphasis,
That tho' my Soul was spreading wide her Plumes
To shoot upon the Wing, flutt'ring she listens
For this last Intelligence, and then has done
With this your World — so speak — be short — say on.

Pbe. I ow'd the Queen a Life, and thus have paid it.
Entrusted to prepare the deadly Draught,
And having form'd within my Mind the dear
Deceit, I gain'd with Ease to my Assistance
The wife, the virtuous *Erasistratus* :

Whose

ANTIOCHUS.

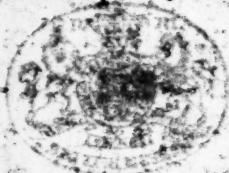
Whose curious Searches, not the Reptile, Weed,
Or Mineral, deep-embowel'd in the Earth,
Can 'scape. This opiate Charm, he cry'd, will steep
Her Senses for a while in deep Oblivion;
Soothing Nature to suspend the subtle Work
Of Life, in all the Mimick'ry of Death.
This Gem be thy Credential to the King.

She gives the King a Jewel.

Sel. For which an Empire be his just Reward,
I own the Gem; the same that clasp'd the rich
Tiara, round the Brow of great *Darius*.
Sleep, gentle *Stratonice*, while we watch
The Day-break of thy Eyes with more Impatience,
Than new created Mortals when they hail'd
The second Morn.

Ant. But yet, ye bounteous Gods,
Will not this too, like all my former Joys,
Vanish in Air? I scarce dare trust the Blessing,
But to review the Precipice on which
I tott'ring stood, is little less than Death.

Sel. All, all, my Son, conspire to make us happier.
The Danger, that our present Peace destroys,
O'erpast, shall serve to recommend our Joys:
Thus all Heav'ns Ways are just, tho' intricate;
But Man shou'd dare t'expect, not snatch his Fate.



F I N I S